



HB 6659 Testimony
Liz Langevin, Director of South Windsor Youth and Family Services
February 27th 2023

Sen. Osten, Rep. Walker, Sen. Berthel, Rep. Nuccio, Sen. Lesser, Rep. Gilchrest, Sen. Somers, Rep. Bolinsky and Members of the Human Services Subcommittee:

My name is Liz Langevin and I am writing on behalf of South Windsor Youth and Family Services. Thank you for your time today to hear my testimony on the Governor's Budget proposal. I would like to thank the Governor for keeping Youth Service Bureaus whole in his proposed budget. It is very much appreciated; however, the extraordinary needs of our youth have elevated the need for additional staffing and resources to support the complex nature of the issues facing them and their families. As such, additional yearly funding of \$60,000 per YSB (\$6.18 million for all 103 YSBs) is vital and will allow for increased staffing and support in the areas of mental health, case management and/or program services (based on the needs of each community) to increase capacity and respond to issues the current funding allocation does not allow.

I have been the Director of South Windsor Youth and Family Services for ten years now and in those ten years, not only have the needs of our community increased, so has the demands of Youth Service Bureau's on a statewide level. Being that YSB's are designed to assess community needs and shape programming based on that, we are well versed in adapting and adjusting what we do. Unfortunately, shifting to meet the needs and demands placed on us, we here in South Windsor have had to eliminate and/or reduce certain positions. Since the pandemic, the need for greater mental health supports as well as the changing truancy laws left us with no choice but to shift a long-standing and impactful part-time Parent Educator position in to a part-time Youth Counselor position. This has meant that needed and well-attended programs like our weekly playgroups, parent-child programs, parent support and home visit services are no longer available to our community. Our mental health counseling referrals continue to grow, with no signs of slowing down and we are at an all-time high with our current caseload. In addition to our mental health counseling being at an all-time high, we have on our caseload some of the most complicated truancy cases we have ever seen. We have families with high needs that would greatly benefit from case management services and supports that we are unable to provide at this time. We know that we can do the work and we want to, however, we need to be sufficiently funded to meet the demands put on us as well as the needs of our own communities.

Thank you very much for listening, I greatly appreciate your time.

Liz Langevin, LCSW
South Windsor Youth and Family Services
Town of South Windsor